

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for supporting workflow design comprising the steps of:
 - a) receiving a description of a business-to-business interaction standard;
 - b) converting the description of business-to-business interaction standard to a structured representation of the business-to-business interaction standard;
 - c) automatically generating at least one process template based on the structured representation of the business-to-business interaction standard; and
 - d) using the process template to design a workflow.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the description of an electronic business-to-business interaction standard includes a description of one of RosettaNet, CBL, EDI, OBI, and cXML.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein converting the description of the electronic business-to-business interaction standard to a structured representation of the business-to-business interaction standard includes
 - for each state, defining all incoming transitions and all outgoing transitions;
 - and
 - for each transition, defining a source state and a target state.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein converting the description of the electronic business-to-business interaction standard to a structured representation of the business-to-business interaction standard further includes
 - representing data in a structured form by employing a mark-up language.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the structured process definition includes structured data and structured data flow.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the structured process definition includes an XMI that includes at least one XML document.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein automatically converting the structured data and flow into at least one process template includes

automatically converting the structured data and flow into at least one process template that is specific to a particular workflow management system.

8. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
storing the process templates into a process template repository; wherein the process templates are accessible to a workflow designer; and
storing the service templates into a service template repository; wherein the service templates are accessible to a workflow designer.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein using the process template to design a workflow includes

retrieving a process template from the process template repository; and
adding at least one local service to the process template.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein using the process template to design a workflow includes

designing a process that includes a plurality of local services; and
adding at least one interaction point service to the process.

11. A method for supporting workflow design comprising the steps of:

- a) receiving a high-level process definition;
- b) converting the high-level process definition into a structured data and flow;
- c) automatically extracting at least one business-to-business (B2B) interaction

point; and

- 5 d) generating a business-to-business (B2B) service template for the extracted interaction point.

12. The method of claim 11 further comprising:

automatically extracting a plurality of business-to-business (B2B) interaction

10 points; and

generating a business-to-business (B2B) service template for each extracted interaction point.

13. The method of claim 11 wherein the business-to-business (B2B) service
15 template conforms to a business-to-business interaction standard that includes one of RosettaNet, CBL, EDI, OBI, and cXML.

14. The method of claim 11 wherein converting the high-level process definition into a structured data and flow includes

20 for each state, defining all incoming transitions and all outgoing transitions; and

for each transition, defining a source state and a target state.

15. The method of claim 11 wherein converting the high-level process definition
25 into a structured data and flow includes

representing data in a structured form by employing a mark-up language.

16. The method of claim 11 wherein the structured process definition includes an XMI that includes at least one XML document.

17. A system for supporting the design of workflows comprising:

5 a structured process definition generator for receiving a description of a business-to-business interaction standard and responsive thereto for generating a structured business-to-business process definition;

10 a process template generator for automatically generating a business-to-business process template based on a structured business-to-business process definition; and

a process template repository for storing the business-to-business process templates.

18. The system of claim 17 further comprising:

15 a service template repository for storing business-to-business service templates.